

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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ICA-11 AID-05 PC-01 CA-01 /083 W

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R 060900Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 276

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 1257

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, EAID, CT, US

SUBJ: US-CAE RELATIONS: AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON PRIME
MINISTER

SUMMARY: IN MY FAREWELL CALL ON THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, I
REVIEWED OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS NOTING THAT WHILE THEY HAD
IMPROVED, MORE NEEDED TO BE DONE. I URGED THE GOCAE TO ASSURE
THAT OUR AID PROJECTS WERE TRULY COOPERATIVE VENTURES TO WHICH
THE CAE ALSO MADE A CONTRIBUTION. I SAID THAT THE LEGISLATIVE
ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR WERE AN IMPORTANT STEP
TOWARDS DEMOCRACY AND SHOULD HELP THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE ABROAD.
THE PRIME MINISTER THANKED ME FOR MY FRANKNESS AND SAID HE TOO
WANTED OUR AID PROJECTS TO SUCCEED. HE STATED THAT THE CAE
SOUGHT GOOD RELATIONS BUT ASKED THAT THE USG BE AWARE OF CAE
SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISMS BY GROUPS IN THE US WHICH DID NOT
UNDERSTAND THE COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF MY FAREWELL CALL ON ACTING PRIME
MINISTER HENRI MAIDOU JUNE 3 TO DISCUSS THE STATE OF US-CAE
RELATIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE. FOREIGN MINISTER
GBEZERA-BRIA AND DCM SMITH SAT IN.

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2. I OPENED THE DISCUSSION ON A POSITIVE NOTE BY REVIEWING
USG ACTIVITIES IN THE CAE OVER THE PAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS:
INITIATION OF FOUR AID PROJECTS, A DOUBLING OF THE SIZE OF THE
PEACE CORPS AND A SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION IN CULTURAL AND INFOR-
MATION PROGRAMS. I NOTED THAT WHILE THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF
MID-1977 HAD AFFECTED BILATERAL RELATIONS, WE HAD MANAGED TO
REESTABLISH A GOOD WORKING ATMOSPHERE IN BANGUI.

3. NONETHELESS, I DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE THE GOCAE WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT ALL WAS WELL. THE EFFECTS OF THE EVENTS OF LAST SUMMER (THE DETENTION OF THE JOURNALISTS AND THE EXPULSION OF THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER) CONTINUED TO BE FELT IN WASHINGTON. PEOPLE WHO OTHERWISE DID NOT FOLLOW EVENTS IN THE CAE CLOSELY, REMEMBERED THESE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED INCIDENTS. MUCH WORK WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE TO OVERCOME THESE MEMORIES AND TO PERMIT, FOR EXAMPLE, A RENEWAL OF AID AND THE VISIT WHICH EMPEROR BOKASSA WISHED TO MAKE TO THE UNITED STATES. AN UNSUCCESSFUL VISIT WOULD BE WORSE THAN NO VISIT. I NOTED THAT THE GOCAE HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO VISIT THE CAE TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES. IN MY VIEW IT SHOULD PERSEVERE IN THAT EFFORT.

4. ALSO IMPORTANT WOULD BE A FULL CENTRAL AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN OUR EXISTING AID PROJECTS. I EXPLAINED THAT IF AMERICANS WERE TO BE CONVINCED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AN AID PROGRAM IN THE CAE, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE PERSUADED THAT OUR PROJECTS WOULD HAVE A LASTING IMPACT IN MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS. WE HAD ENCOUNTERED MANY PROBLEMS. COUNTERPARTS WERE OFTEN NOT ASSIGNED TO OUR PROJECTS. IF THEY WERE, THEY WERE NOT PAID AND SOMETIMES AS IN OUHAM, THEY WERE NOT HOUSED. COUNTERPART INVOLVEMENT WAS ESSENTIAL IF THE GOCAE WAS TO CARRY ON THE EFFORT AFTER AID SUPPORT ENDED. I WAS AWARE OF THE CAE'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, BUT THERE WERE STILL THINGS WHICH THE CAE COULD DO. IF AID WERE EVENTUALLY TO BE RESUMED THE GOCAE MUST
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BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT WAS WORKING BESIDE US TO HELP ITS POOR.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, I NOTED THE UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE EARLIER THIS YEAR TO ELIMINATE THE LEAST POLITICAL USG PROGRAM IN THE CAE, THE PEACE CORPS. I SUGGESTED THAT THE GOCAE MIGHT WISH TO ASK ITS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO OBTAIN THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE DEBATE TO HELP IN UNDERSTANDING THE THINKING OF VARIOUS GROUPS IN THE U.S.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, I SAID, THE POLITICAL GESTURES OF EMPEROR BOKASSA IN CONGRATULATING PRESIDENT CARTER ON THE SIGNING OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES AND IN OFFERING TO SIGN THE VARIOUS ANTI-HIJACKING CONVENTIONS, HAD BEEN APPRECIATED. THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR AND THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD ALSO HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPACT. THE SIGNING OF A CONSULAR CONVENTION WOULD BE A SIMILARLY POSITIVE STEP.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE APPRECIATED BY UNUSUALLY FRANK REVIEW OF THE STATE OF OUR RELATIONS. HE SAID HE, TOO, WANTED TUR AID PROJECTS TO SUCCEED AND WOULD FOLLOW UP WITH THE

MINISTERS DIRECTLY CONCERNED THE POINTS I HAD MADE. MAIDOU EMPHASIZED THAT THE CAE WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US. IT RECOGNIZED THE GREAT LIBERAL TRADITION IN THE US. HE ADDED, HOWEVER THAT THE IMMENSENESS OF THE US MEANT THAT THERE WERE GROUPS WHICH DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION, AND THIS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING IRRITATED BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE CAE WAS SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM BY SUCH GROUPS.

8. WITH REGARD TO MY OTHER POINTS, MAIDOU SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT DIPLOMATS COULD HELP OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER. THE PROBLEMS OF A YEAR AGO HAD BEEN DEALT WITH; CONGRESS HAD NOT IN FACT CUT OFF THE PEACE CORPS PROGRAM IN THE CAE; AND, AFTER A PERIOD OF HESITATION, THE USG HAD DECIDED TO CONTINUE AID PROJECTS ALREADY STARTED IN THE CAE.
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THESE FACTS PROVIDED SOME GROUND FOR OPTIMISM.

9. COMMENT: AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE REPEATED PUBLIC PROFESSIONS OF UNDYING FRIENDSHIP WHICH HAVE ACCOMPANIED BY DEPARTURE, I HAVE TRIED IN MY FAREWELL CALLS TO BRING GOCAE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 1257

MINISTERS DOWN TO EARTH AND TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT REALITIES. WHILE I HAVE NOT MINIMIZED THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS OF RECENT YEARS, I HAVE REMINDED THEM THAT MANY NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

REMAIN FROM THE ADVERSE PUBLICITY WHICH THE CAE RECEIVED IN 1977.
I AM CERTAIN MAIDOU APPRECIATES THESE FACTS, AND THE DIFFICUL-
TIES IN PARTICULAR FACING THE EMPEROR'S VISIT. TO THE DEGREE
POSSIBLE, I THINK HE WILL DO WHAT HE CAN TO DAMPEN THE EMPEROR'S
EXPECTATIONS AND TO KEEP BILATERAL RELATIONS ON A BUSINESSLIKE
LEVEL, BUT IN THE LAST ANALYSIS HE IS NOT IN A POSITION TO CALL
THE SHOTS.
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